



DNR Reports . . . by Glenn Therres

Maryland's endangered species act has been in existence since 1973. It is our primary tool for listing and protecting plants and animals in Maryland whose existence in the State is at risk. There are three categories for listing such species. "Endangered" status is given to those species whose continued existence as a viable component of the State's flora or fauna is determined to be in jeopardy. This affords the greatest level of protection. "Threatened" species are those species that appear likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered. "Species in need of conservation" are those animals in need of conservation measures to continue their abilities to sustain themselves successfully. There is also an "extirpated" list of those native species that no longer occur in the State.

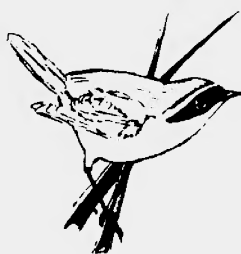
The current list in Maryland includes 595 species; 459 plants and 136 animals. Of these, 138 species are listed as extirpated. There are 337 state-endangered species; 265 plants and 72 animals. Species listed as threatened total 95 species; 77 plants and 18 animals. Wildlife species in need of conservation include 25 species. There are 32 birds on the lists, including 11 endangered, 7 threatened, 7 listed as in need of conservation, and 7 extirpated species.

Periodically, we evaluate the lists based on new scientific information. We reassess the status of listed species to determine if their population levels have changed. If so, we then evaluate the category in which the species is listed relative to their population changes. Is the species doing better or worst? Does it need more protection or does it warrant continued protection? These are some of the questions we must address. In addition to species currently listed, we also assess the status of species that may warrant listing. Listing criteria are included in the State law and our endangered species regulations. Those are the standards by which we evaluate listings.

Recently, we completed an evaluation of our list and are proposing changes, including additions, deletions, and reclassifications for 66 species; 34 plants and 32 animals. Twenty-nine species are being proposed as additions to the lists, 16 species are being proposed to be withdrawn from the lists, and 21 species are proposed for reclassifications. Of the animals, seven are birds, 15 fish, five butterflies, three tiger beetles, one freshwater mussel, and one mammal. Six bird actions are reclassifications and one is an addition. Five species are proposed for endangered status, one addition to the threatened list, and one reclassification to "in need of conservation."

Four birds currently listed as threatened are proposed to be upgraded to the endangered list. They are Gull-billed Tern, Black Skimmer, Short-eared Owl, and Sedge Wren. The breeding populations of the two colonial nesting waterbirds and Sedge Wren have continued to decline in Maryland over time. Short-eared Owl historically nested in the marshes of the Eastern Shore, but now only one nesting pair is known from a reclaimed strip mine in Garrett County. Northern

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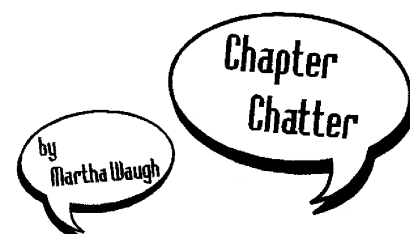
Anne Arundel Club Loses A Distinguished Member by Helen Ford

Members of the Anne Arundel Chapter are mourning the loss of a club patriarch. Harold Wierenga, Sr., father of Hal Wierenga, died on November 7, aged 91.

Harold spent his entire professional career teaching mathematics, first in high schools in his native Kansas, then at Drexel University in Philadelphia, and later as head of the Mathematics Department at Central State College in Edmond, Oklahoma. In 1948 he moved to Annapolis, where he taught at the U.S. Naval Academy until his retirement in 1975.

Professor Wierenga was a lifelong naturalist. His son Hal recalls that as soon as school ended in early summer, the whole family would pile into the car and spend the entire season exploring the natural wonders of the United States, beautifully photographed by Professor Harold. Hal credits his dad with inspiring his own lifelong love of nature.

Harold was a long-time member of MOS and the Anne Arundel Bird Club. For many years he served as Chapter Coordinator of the annual Annapolis/Gibson Island Christmas Bird Count (a task later inherited by his son Hal). Harold frequently gave lectures to school groups, bird clubs, garden clubs, and other civic organizations, illustrated with his own slides of birds, butterflies, and other natural subjects. For his many services to the Club and to the community, Harold was gratefully awarded and Honorary Life Membership by the Anne Arundel Chapter.



Montgomery Chapter Member Honored—On Oct 17 Don Messersmith, Montgomery Chapter member and State Director, received the Audubon Naturalist Society's Paul Bartsch Award for Distinguished Contributions to Natural History. The group's highest tribute, the Bartsch Award recognizes Don's lifetime achievements as professor at the University of Maryland and the USDA graduate school, his pioneering work in the ecotourism field, and his institutional support of international conservation and education projects, as well as his many contributions to ANS. Don joins such previous Bartsch Award luminaries as Rachel Carson, Roger Tory Peterson, Montgomery County's Lola Oberman, and the late Claudia Wilds.

Cecil's "Blue Bird Man" Is Recognized—Jerry Newman (The Bluebird Man) of the Cecil Chapter received the Wildlife Habitat Council's "Community Partner of the Year" award for his tireless efforts in bluebird education, trail establishment and maintenance, involving youth in discovering an appreciation of bluebirds, and hand-crafting hundreds of bluebird boxes in Cecil County and surrounding areas.

Tri-County Chapter Member Marks a Big Birding Year—Tri-County Chapter world birder Eric Decker has put in a stupendous travel year birding across the continents. He first conquered the birds in the Dominican Republic. Then he traveled on to two weeks in Cuba followed by a month in Japan, Thailand, and Bhutan. Early summer then found him dutifully atlas in perhaps a bit less glamorous Wicomico County. Then it was off for two months in Australia. He hints at the prospect of spending six months in Africa next year. Wife Patsy, also an avid birder (although not a lister) and companion on most trips, has been seen to raise eyebrows over this one.

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For information on advertising rates and deadlines, contact the editor.

Copy deadlines for the March/April issue are:

Mar/Apr Calendar Activities:
January 25

All Other Submissions:
February 1

MOS Planning Meeting

by Paul Zucker



On November 9 MOS held a daylong meeting dedicated to long-range planning. The entire membership was invited, and about 50 people attended, representing 12 chapters. Roughly speaking, half of the attendees were board members and half were from the general membership. As a result, a broad cross-section of the views of the membership was represented. Since this was the first time MOS did anything like this, no one had any idea of what to expect. The broad commonality of views that emerged was a welcome surprise.

In order to focus the discussion and obtain concrete recommendations, four issues were chosen for discussion:

- How can MOS best serve the local chapters?
- How can MOS strengthen its membership?
- What role should the sanctuaries play in the future of MOS?
- Would a different committee structure better enable MOS to accomplish our goals?

The registrants provided their preferences, and discussion groups were preassigned.

We invited Joe Hickey, an outside facilitator, to lead the meeting. He started by asking all the participants to write down what they like best about MOS. These views were then shared (and the notes collected). A broad consensus emerged, emphasizing the people in MOS and the shared activities. For the next hour, the group broke into six discussion sessions. Five were on the topic of the sanctuaries and one was on the committee structure topic. Each discussion group was asked to review the history and the issues and then to make three recommendations. When the sheets with the rec-

ommendations were posted and discussed, it became apparent that the five sanctuary discussion groups had come to very similar conclusions. Every group emphasized that we need to keep the sanctuaries, but they raised serious issues about keeping and maintaining the two old houses. The group on committee structure pointed out how the committees could be grouped together, but recommended against forming a different set of committees.

In the afternoon four discussion groups addressed the membership topic, while two addressed the chapter-state relationship. The recommendations from the two sets of groups turned out to be related. The chapter-state groups emphasized the ways in which the state organization could help the chapters in their membership activities: providing materials, providing communication and coordination, and by sponsoring state-wide activities. The membership groups pointed out how important the chapters were in this effort and then emphasized similar ways in which the state could provide support.

Currently, the recommendations are being assembled and consolidated for presentation to the board at its December 7th meeting. After that discussion, the executive committee (supported by the long-range planning committee) will start implementing the recommendations. Continued communication between the executive committee, the board, and the membership is essential for the success of this project. Our meeting provided a good start, bringing together a broad group of members and their views, and we need to continue together in this spirit.

Sanctuary Report

by Dotty Mumford

Ice Storm Damage at Carey Run—The late October ice storm that did so much damage in Garrett County did not spare Carey Run Sanctuary. Many limbs and tops of trees were brought down. The main power line to the house was also brought down. The power line has been reconnected but it will take a number of days to clean up the many downed trees and tree limbs. Doug Parker is asking for volunteers to help him with the downed trees and with other cleanup tasks. Doug needs volunteers with chain saws to help cut up the downed material and he needs other volunteers to help haul away the material after it is cut up. The upcoming chain saw workdays will take place after the winter weather has passed by. If you're interested in helping, please contact Doug Parker at (301) 663-1909 or by e-mail at parkernkda@aol.com.

Partner's In Flight Habitat Recommendations—The Sanctuary Strategic Planning Committee has held three meetings to discuss the habitat recommendations made by Partner's In Flight with members of local chapters.

The first meeting was held August 17 in Easton where members of the Talbot, Caroline and Kent

chapters met with committee members to discuss habitat at Pelot, Mill Creek and Marengo Sanctuaries. Among the items discussed was the lack of access and trails at Mill Creek. Jan Reese is organizing a workday to be held in March 2003 to improve the access to the parking lot and reestablish the trail in the upland section of the sanctuary.

The second meeting was held August 24 at Carey Run Sanctuary. Member of the Allegany, Washington and Frederick chapters were present to discuss the habitat and other issues concerning Carey Run. The biggest problem here is the removal of the Autumn Olive that MOS planted on the property in the 1960's and the restoration of the big field to create grassland habitat. It was decided that in the future we should have two workdays at Carey Run — the usual one on the last Saturday in April and another one sometime in September.

The third meeting was held November 3 at Irish Grove where workday participants and committee members went over the recommendations for Irish Grove. Many of the recommendations have already been done or are in the process of being done — such as the phragmites control being done in cooperation with

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DNR REPORTS

(continued from page 1, column 1)

Goshawk is currently listed as an endangered species statewide. It is known to only breed in Garrett County and possibly in Allegany County, therefore we are proposing to continue listing it as endangered in these two counties but nowhere else in the State.

The proposed addition to the threatened list is Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrow. This is a subspecies of the Swamp Sparrow that is restricted to a small portion of the mid Atlantic coastal region. This subspecies has recently experienced a severe, dramatic decline in most or all of its Maryland range. It now occurs at 20% of known historic sites in the State.

Peregrine Falcon is being proposed for reclassification from endangered to "in need of conservation" for the subspecies *anatum*. In May 2000, DNR was petitioned to delist the peregrine falcon. A panel of experts was convened to assist DNR in the review. I reported on this review in my column in the November/December 2000 issue of Maryland Yellowthroat. The current breeding population of Peregrine Falcons in Maryland is comparable to historic numbers, though now nesting on artificial structures instead of natural cliff sites. Due to the current population's dependency on management and maintenance of their artificial nesting structures, we are proposing to list this subspecies as "in need of conservation."

The formal process for changing the State's lists is through regulations. That process will take place early this year. Public input is a part of the process. Your thoughts and comments on these proposed additions and reclassifications are encouraged.

CHAPTER CHATTER

(continued from page 1, column 3)

Anne Arundel Adventurers Visit Iceland—It was off on another birding adventure to Iceland during the early part of October for Gladys Lambert and Janelle Dietrich of the Anne Arundel Bird Club. Janelle shared her adventure, "Iceland proved to be a most unusual country to visit—much like I would envision a moon landing to be. The country is diverse—one moment driving over barren land, the next over lush, green fields. Only nine passerine birds are native to Iceland so most of the birds are coastal, sea birds. We even saw an Icelandic Gull in Iceland. What a treat!!! Despite cold, windy, damp days, we logged 49 species of birds adding five life birds to Gladys' list and twenty-one to mine. (You can tell who has traveled more!) Some real treats were the Whooper Swan, European Shag, Gray Heron, Rock Ptarmigan, Eurasian Curlew, Black-headed Gull, Meadow Pipit and the bird of the trip—the White-tailed Eagle. I never thought I'd be happy to see a starling but the Rose Colored Starling was quite a sight! On our way back to Reykjavik the last night, we were treated to hours of displays by the Northern Lights. It truly is a mystical experience. There were no "city" lights to distract from the spectacular view. A wonderful ending to a most unusual trip."

San Francisco Birding Highlights by Birder and Non-birder—Mary Chetelat of the Baltimore Chapter visited San Francisco recently and was rewarded with what she termed "easy" birding. The highlight was a day trip to Ano Nuevo State Reserve with a naturalist, Alvin Kernan of Nature Treks. They saw Mary's target bird, the California Quail, plus Pigeon Guillemot, Black Oystercatcher, White-tailed Kite, and many other species. In Lincoln Park, she found Pygmy Nuthatch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Brown Creeper, California and Spotted Towhee. Her non-birding husband adds that they also saw the Maltese Falcon at John's Grill and the St. Louis Cardinals at Giants Stadium.

On October 13, 2002 Mystical Circles Appear All Over Maryland—The Big Sit! experience has been spreading around the state. The Big Sit! is an international bird-a-thon contest with the object of tallying as many bird species as can be heard or seen in one day by observers sitting within the confines of a 17 foot circle. This year the phenomenon in Maryland even attracted the attention of the Washington Post. Walter Ellison reports that on October 13, he, Peter Mann, and Nancy Martin officially inaugurated the first Eastern Neck NWR Big Sit. They counted 56 species and it took some will power to maintain the circle from 6:40 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in cloudy weather. Frustratingly, the best bird of the day was a Gambel's Sparrow seen while the birder was outside the magic circle. Rick Sussman reported on Montgomery's first Big Sit on the dike across the parking area from the boat ramp at Black Hill Regional Park. The circle was monitored from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. with a tally of 45 species. The highlights were two Solitary Sandpipers, a single Spotted Sandpiper, and Tree Swallows. The Montgomery County Sitting Ducks were Rick Sussman, Tom Marko, Clive Harris, Cynthia and Tony Meade, and Janet Millenson. The Baltimore Bird Club hosted their second Ft. McHenry Big Sit and tallied 772 birds of 66 species in 17 hours. Their highlights were: Clay-colored, Savannah, Chipping, Swamp, Song, Lincoln's, White-throated, and Field Sparrows, American Black Duck, a singing Marsh Wren, Black and White female Warbler, a Palm Warbler, and a Winter Wren. Danny Bystrak of Anne Arundel did an unofficial Big Sit in his backyard overlooking Jug Bay. He saw 66 species and was surprised by two Royal Terns, a Bonaparte's Gull, a Least Bittern, a

Black and White Warbler, and a Parula Warbler. Howard County birders, sitting for their fourth year, were disappointed by a new low species count: 39. Matt Haffner, Jim Stasz, and Zach Baer, joined by Norm and Fran Saunders, tried a Big Sit at the end of Bayside Campground on the boardwalk towards the canoe rental and tallied the second Maryland State record of Eurasian Collared-Dove as one of their 67 species. The Ocean City weather included miserable cold wind and a steady drizzle. They're hoping for a better score in 2003. The Big Sit! offers birders a chance to observe the pattern of bird life and behavior throughout the day.

Cecil Vacationers—Hardworking Cecil Chapter members, Rick and Candi Lee invested a two week vacation in their first visit to the southwest. (Rick is the Chapter president and Candi is the newsletter editor.) Candi reports that "we did Arizona and New Mexico...seeing the wondrous natural sights. We had 128 bird species including 36 lifers!" Candi says that their best birding experience was seeing American Dipper in both Arizona and New Mexico, delighting in "their silly bounce, bounce, bellyflop into cold mountain streams."

Allegany Conquers Ice Storm—Allegany chapter members endured a precedent breaking ice storm and have planned special work days at the MOS sanctuary Carey Run to cut up and remove downed trees. The Chapter's traditional fall banquet was held November 2 at the Frostburg Community Center with 37 people attending. The speaker was Dave Weesner from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources who gave a slide presentation on owls. Charlotte and Nancy Folk organized the banquet and managed to provide lots of door prizes. Kathleen Helker and Gladys Faherty put together a successful Silent Auction.

Baltimore Birder Finds Other MOSers, Birds, Flies, and Wine at Point Pelee—Cathy Carroll made two visits to Point Pelee National Park in Ontario this spring and summer. On May 26 she saw 12 warbler species including Mourning Warbler. In the afternoon she spotted a Maryland sweatshirt wearer who turned out to be fellow Baltimore Chapter member Steve Hoag, birding with his wife, Cathy. The three totaled about 56 species that day. Steve and Cathy went on to Mio, Michigan where they succeeded in seeing Kirtland's Warbler despite being under vicious attack by deer flies. Back on Point Pelee in late August, Cathy endured swarms of stable flies, who appeared to be attracted to insect repellent. She saw some 30 species on this trip, including watching three Barn Swallow nestlings being fed by their parents. Point Pelee is rated one of the top fifteen birding spots in North America by the October issue of Birder's World magazine. Cathy volunteers that she'll be glad to chat with anyone who wants to visit the area and needs information. She recommends the Pelee Island Winery at the end of a long birding day. "The wine is as lovely as the birds."

MOS Scholarship Winner Thanks Her Sponsors—Shelly Nicoll, winner of an MOS scholarship to attend a Maine Audubon Camp, wrote an article on her experiences at Hog Island for the Montgomery newsletter, The Chat. Shelly reports that "everything you've heard about the wonderful hospitality and food...is true." A new birder, Shelly spotted many life birds. Her best day included a boat trip to Eastern Egg Rock (home of the puffin restoration project), Wreck Island (a Blue Heron colony), and Harbor Island. The group saw Atlantic Puffins, Common, Arctic, and Roseate Terns, and Razorbills. Shelly extended special thanks to Don Messersmith, Bill Kulp, Barbara Holloman, Susan Strange, and Mike Bowen for facilitating her scholarship.



Picking up from where we left off in the last issue of the Yellowthroat, here are some tips for locating other species of owls in Maryland:

Barn Owl - During the first Atlas, Barn Owls were tough to find. In the published Atlas species account, Pete Jeschke and Glenn Therres commented: "The Barn Owl posed a challenge to Atlas workers. It is generally uncommon, highly nocturnal, and rarely seen or heard." So what can you do to be more successful? Well, you have one slight advantage with this owl in that searching during the daytime likely will give better results. Barn Owls prefer open country for foraging, but avoid regularly disturbed lands that don't support the populations of small mammals they feed upon. Look for fields, farmlands, pastures, grasslands, meadows, and coastal marshes in which to search by day for nest sites. These include barns (surprise, surprise), silos, church steeples, chimneys, abandoned buildings, tree cavities, ledges, Wood Duck and other artificial nest boxes, deer and waterfowl blinds, and similar structures. If no owl is present, look for fresh pellets and excrement as they will also be good indicators of a nesting Barn Owl. Ask farmers and other property owners if they are aware of any Barn Owls and for permission to inspect promising locations. At night you might hear their hissing calls as they fly over fields and marshes, or the raspy calls of owlets in the nest begging for food. Although their safe dates extend from April 15 through September 30, Barn Owls nest all year in Maryland and may be double brooded. Thus, you can look for them year-round.

Northern Saw-whet Owl - Here's an owl for which you could contribute new information about its breeding biology. In the first Atlas, only two blocks yielded saw-whet owls within safe dates and these were determined to be only possible breeders. It wasn't until late April of 1993, when the Atlas had ended, that Dave Brinker and Kevin Dodge documented the first nest in Garrett County, Maryland. Country-wide, they are woodland generalists with a preference for coniferous forests. In Maryland, evergreen trees or shrubs, including Red Spruce, Eastern Hemlock and rhododendron are among the dominant vegetation within breeding territories. Cavity nesters, saw-whets use both natural cavities and nest boxes. Try tape-recorded calls (cautiously), starting in April. (There is some debate that May 5 is too late a beginning

safe date.) The ending safe date for the Northern Saw-whet Owl is September 20.

Long-eared Owl and Short-eared Owl - No breeding Long-eared or Short-eared Owls were found during the first Atlas. There is historical breeding evidence for each, but the extent of their current breeding in Maryland or D.C. is poorly understood. In addition, the Short-eared Owl is officially listed by the state of Maryland as In Need of Conservation. Safe dates for both species are May 1 and September 30. Long-eared Owls are known to lay eggs in old crow, hawk, or squirrel nests. You might try dense evergreen stands in otherwise open country. Short-eared Owls nest on the ground, also in open country, especially grasslands, meadows, or open fields. The Atlas Handbook lists Long-eareds as rare nesters in the Garrett/Allegany County section of Maryland and suggests searching for Short-eareds from the Piedmont west and also on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

If you think you've found a nesting Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared, or Short-eared owl, contact your county coordinator and state coordinator

Walter Ellison (410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net) for advice on how to proceed. It is important to search for these species to learn more about their breeding in Maryland and the District, but all three are considered rare breeders and additional documentation via the Atlas verification form will be required. It is imperative that you not reveal their nesting locations to anyone except your county coordinator and Walter. The successful breeding of these rare species will very likely depend on your judicious behavior.

Except for the latter two, you can find much more information about each species, especially the saw-whet, in the publication, Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia. (See the list of references.)

It's not too soon to start examining the territory in your block(s) to identify locations to look for owls. Because, yes, I want **YOU** to find Owls! Good Owling! If you have any other good suggestions for finding owls, please send them to the author and she will have them appended to the article when it is placed on the MOS website.

Acknowledgements and References

Harry Armistead, Rick Blom, Lynn Davidson, Walter Ellison, Jan Reese, Jo Solem, and Hal Wierenga provided significant editorial assistance and/or owling information and tips, and I am very grateful to them for their help.

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How to turn Atlasing hours into a tax deduction

by Janet Millenson

The first year of collecting data for the new Breeding Bird Atlas is over. All across Maryland, hundreds of MOS members welcomed a fresh excuse to spend even more time birding. Yup, it sure was tough spending all those hours out in the field, away from the pleasures of home — bills, dirty dishes, phone calls from telemarketers...

Did you know that one hour of volunteer time is valued at \$14.83 by the IRS? Wouldn't it be great if you could deduct on your income taxes the value of time donated to the Atlas Project? Unfortunately, IRS rules say you're not allowed to do so. But we've come up with a clever alternative:

Write a check to the Atlas Project for the *equivalent worth* of an hour or two of your time (i.e., \$15 or \$30) and you can deduct that amount on your tax return along with your other charitable contributions. It's perfectly legal! If you don't have an Atlas block of your own, view this as a tax-deductible way to "pay" the folks who spent last year squinting at a table of safe dates and trying to figure out which letter codes to record.

So sponsor your own field work (or a friend's) for the Atlas Project at \$15 an hour, and get a tax break from Uncle Sam. And know that you're helping support an important scientific effort that will benefit Maryland's birds.

Send your tax-deductible donation to MOS Treasurer Shiras Guion, 8007 Martown Road, Laurel, MD 20723. Make your check payable to "MOS M.A.P.", and let us know whose Atlasing work you're underwriting. Thanks, and best wishes for happy birding in 2003!

Conservation News by Maureen F. Harvey



The Conservation Connection

Proposed Windfarms = Potential Threats to Migrating Songbirds and Raptors

In October 2002, Dan Boone, Jon Boone, and Chan Robbins voiced their concerns during two preliminary hearings before the Maryland Public Service Commission regarding requests to speed up the application process for two separate companies that propose to construct windmill farms on the border of Allegany and Garrett Counties, Maryland. The companies wish to begin construction in summer 2003 to take advantage of Clinton-era tax incentives for power companies that develop alternatives to fossil fuel. The concept of using alternative energy sources is very appealing to those of us with environmental concerns; however, it is unwise to rush into building windmills along Allegheny ridges without sufficient knowledge of the potential impact on wildlife in general and migrating birds in particular. Additional hearings are scheduled for January 2003, and our three champions plan to attend. Dan Boone expressed his concerns in an email on November 12, 2002 to alert Audubon Pennsylvania and National Audubon to this situation, in which he stated:

"I'm writing to you and other Audubon leaders to share concerns about the potential threat to songbirds from the new generation of very tall windmills currently being proposed throughout the Appalachians. These 'windfarms' are industrial facilities that can contain from 20 to several hundred windmills - each up to 450-feet tall. Large windfarms are under review now for placement on high elevation ridgetops in Maryland and West Virginia...."

"I am very concerned that windfarms sited atop prominent north/south-trending ridges in the Appalachian region may be a serious threat to nocturnal migrant songbirds. A vast number of songbirds seasonally funnel through our region by following these landforms - the majority does so at night. Nocturnal migrants such as warblers and sparrows have long been known to fly at altitudes low enough to be killed at larger communication towers. However, recent studies have shown that a significant fraction may fly low enough during normal conditions to encounter tall windmill structures (under 400 feet). An added concern is that migrating birds are likely to fly even lower when passing over or along these ridgetops."

"Windfarm developers throughout the region are attempting to expedite the review and approval process in order to beat a deadline for a federal tax credit promoting alternative energy production. In addition, these developers are attempting to persuade the public and decision-makers that their windfarms do not pose a significant threat to migrating songbirds based primarily on the low numbers of bird kills found during previous windfarms studies elsewhere in the country. Although these studies have found relatively low bird mortality caused by windmills, the study sites may not be directly comparable to newly proposed windfarm sites on prominent ridgetops since they were mostly located on farm-field or grassland

habitat and often involved much shorter windmill structures."

"Unfortunately, very little is known about the numbers, species and altitudes of nocturnal migrants that may pass over individual ridges during migration. This lack of knowledge is further confounded by the variability in migration caused by weather and time of year. Sadly, it is this lack of basic information about nocturnal migrant songbirds that has enabled the developers of new windfarms to avoid an adequate assessment of potential impacts."

"Consultants for windfarm developers in MD and WV have prepared 'avian risk assessment' reports, which concluded that 'no significant impacts' are likely to songbirds and other wildlife based on collisions with the new generation of windmills. This conclusion was made despite the fact that these very tall structures would be sited in long arrays running for miles along the same prominent Appalachian ridgetops noted for bird migration. However, their assertions are not substantiated by good scientific information or site-specific research - and merely reflect the consultant's personal opinion. An 'avian risk assessment' is included in each application for permission to construct the MD and WV windfarms; all are very similar in form, substance and conclusion."

"However, an independent expert was recently hired by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to review the 'avian risk assessment' prepared by the consultant for our two windfarm projects. The DNR's consultant - Dr. Michael Morrison, a widely-recognized authority concerning windpower-bird interactions, noted that the applications for these projects to the Maryland Public Service Commission did not follow the siting guidelines established by the windpower industry - which call for pre-construction surveys to collect baseline information about bird activity at sites with concerns about collision impacts. The consultant's 'priority recommendation' called for project approval to be delayed in both cases until at least one year of baseline data is collected and evaluated."

"Efforts are underway in MD and WV to greatly expand the current number of proposals with the desire of making the region the 'Persian Gulf of Windpower'.... I believe similar expansions are happening in Pennsylvania and New York. Consequently, windfarms are expected to rapidly proliferate throughout the Appalachians because most of the ridges have substantial wind energy potential, because of tax subsidies and increased demand for 'green' energy..., and because there are relatively few permitting requirements. Incredibly, there appears to be no federal nexus for these projects that could trigger an assessment of their cumulative impact."

"...We need to slow the rush to construct windfarms in areas that are especially prone to interfere with bird migration. Not only would a more deliberative approach in the siting of windfarms help protect declining songbird

populations, but it also would likely prevent another disaster like "Altamont, California" - which may prove devastating to the nascent windpower industry."

"For your information, I have attached...the comments of Dr. Chandler S. Robbins - who is deeply troubled over proposals to site windfarms on Appalachian ridges."

Dan Boone

And here are excerpts from Chan's very detailed (and impressive) "Comments on Proposals for Windpower Facilities on Allegheny Ridges" of October 16, 2002:

"I am concerned because a 44-page report written for Clipper Windpower, Inc. by my friend Paul Kerlinger appears to grossly misrepresent the threat to migratory birds by the windpower Project. Paul is a respected New Jersey birder who has done research on hawk flights, etc. on the New Jersey shore, but he is totally unfamiliar with bird migration in western Maryland and he failed to contact people who are knowledgeable about that migration. He also failed to examine the 55 years of bird migration material published in Maryland Birdlife, of which I am editor. He claimed that the ridge tops were not important to migrating birds, even though in Appendix 3 he quoted Ed Thompson as saying 'lots of birds use them' and he cited Bob Ringler as saying the ridge tops are 'primary routes for migrating songbirds.' We have known for 50 years (Robbins. Maryland Birdlife 6:1-11, 1950) that migrating hawks use essentially all the ridges in western Maryland during their spring and fall migrations. Nearly all the hawks and eagles that nest in the northeastern U.S. and the eastern provinces of Canada migrate through Maryland. Tens of thousands of them take advantage of the rising air currents over the ridges every year. One of the rarest of these is the Golden Eagle. Over the years, the late Jim Paulus counted a very impressive 500 Golden Eagles as well as tens of thousands of other raptors migrating along the top of Town Hill ridge."

"It is common knowledge that thrushes, which are notoriously vocal in flight, fly low along the ridges in their nocturnal migration. Paul acknowledged in Appendix 3 that Bob Ringler had mentioned this, yet in the main report Paul claimed that the birds only flew high and would not be low enough to hit the blades. More than 50 years ago, Orville Crowder and I set up a spotting scope beside old route US 40 at the summit of Town Hill and watched the silhouettes of migrating birds crossing the full moon. These migrants were flying just a few hundred feet above the ground and were easily audible from our position."

"Paul's statement that 'night migrants are not known to follow ridges at night' is dead wrong and is irresponsible and dangerous when used to imply that ridgetop wind generators are no hazard to migrating birds. Migrants are well known to follow 'leading lines' such as shorelines, rivers,

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CONSERVATION CORNER

(continued from previous page)

and ridges that are oriented in the direction they are heading. Migrants gain lift from the updrafts along even minor ridges, such as along the Fall Line where my house in Laurel is located. In a continent-wide study of nocturnal migration in 1953 (Lowery and Newman, pp. 238-263 in *Recent Studies in Avian Biology* by Albert Wolfson, ed., Univ. Ill. Press. 1955) involving observations at 325 localities, my Fall Line tally of birds silhouetted against the moon on the night of September 22-23, 1953, was the highest on the continent; when extrapolated to the standard measurement of birds crossing a line one mile long (and corrected for the angle of the moon), it was determined that 230,000 migrants passed over my house that one night."

"Paul acknowledged that birds do follow the Allegheny Front based on George Hall's fall migration banding station. I looked at Dr. Hall's fall banding summaries for the last five years for which they have been published in *North American Bird Bander* (1996-2000) and compared his catch per unit effort with mine in Laurel for the same five years. He caught an average of 67 birds per 100 net-hours compared to 9 at my station. By this ratio, 1.7 million birds could migrate along the Allegheny Front in a single night, and using William Evans' acoustic measurements from the Appalachians in upstate New York (*Applications of Acoustic Bird Monitoring for the Wind Power Industry*, see www.nationalwind.org/pubs/avian98/21oEvans-Acoustics.pdf), one quarter of these

FINDING OWLS

(continued from page 4)

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- Kaufman, K. 1996. *Lives of North American Birds*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Massachusetts.
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- Sutton, P. and C. Sutton. 1994. *How to Spot an Owl*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Massachusetts.

SANCTUARY REPORT

(continued from page 2)

DNR and US Fish & Wildlife Service. One new project evolved from this meeting and that is to concentrate on improving and extending Rail Trail. It was also pointed out that the best time of year to do certain projects was often not at the times we have scheduled our two workdays. So, we may be revising our workday schedules at Irish Grove to reflect the project to be done. This may result in several "project days" instead of two big workdays.

MOS Workshop held on November 9— Sanctuaries were a "hot" topic at the workshop held on November 9 in Howard County. During the morning sessions there were five groups that discussed sanctuaries. Each group was asked to

(more than 400,000 birds) would be flying less than 400 feet above the ridgetop."

"Migration along the ridges certainly is not inconsequential as claimed by Paul Kerlinger. Millions of birds from the northern half of the North American continent regularly funnel into the Appalachian ridges; see the Canadian Atlas of Bird Banding by D. Brewer et al. (Special Publication, Canadian Wildlife Service. 2000) to view documented records of birds from all across Canada converging on the Appalachian ridges. Paul did correctly cite material from Christmas Counts, Breeding Bird Survey, and the MD/DC Atlas, to show that there were no endangered species nesting or wintering at the sites. He did not mention, however, that the entire population of the endangered Kirtland's warbler has to fly over the central Appalachians twice a year between their Michigan breeding ground and their winter home in the Bahamas."

"He cited many references to lack of, or small number of bird casualties, at similar installations elsewhere, but in no case did he provide supporting evidence of protocol and time spent (if any) searching for dead birds. In view of the enormity of the potential threat to the North American migratory bird population, it is my strong recommendation that no construction should begin on this project in Maryland until the impact on birds at a similar unit that is nearing completion in nearby West Virginia is thoroughly evaluated."

Chandler S. Robbins. Sc.D.

U.S. Birds Continue to Decline; USFWS Considering Cerulean Warbler for "Threatened" list

The National Audubon Society reported that one-fourth of the nominal 800 species of native U.S. birds are declining or in trouble. The report states that many songbird species have declined by 50% or more, and the Cerulean Warbler is down by over 70%. View their WatchList 2002 at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/watchlist>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reviewing the status of the Cerulean Warbler, after reviewing a petition signed by 28 organizations to list the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The petition provided data indicating declining populations with loss of woodland habitat as the primary cause. The USFWS is seeking additional information from the public on the Cerulean Warbler and threats to its habitat. The MOS is planning to submit a statement. Anyone may submit information and comments to Field Supervisor, Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 608 East Cherry Street, Room 200, Columbia, Missouri 65201 or fax to 573-876-1914. The deadline for comments is January 21, 2003. Information on the petition to list the Cerulean Warbler and the USFWS 2000 status assessment is available at <http://midwest.fws.gov/endangered/>.

come up with three recommendations. Among the 15 recommendations there was some overlap which fell into four main areas of concern:

- 1) All five groups wanted MOS to keep sanctuaries and that two even suggested adding more land to the system.
- 2) Four of the groups expressed concerns about the buildings at Irish Grove and Carey Run:
 - Two groups recommended evaluating the buildings as to costs vs. benefits.
 - One group felt that the present structures should be replaced by multipurpose buildings.
 - One group felt that the present structures should be demolished.

- 3) Three groups stressed increasing the use of the sanctuaries by chapters and others for education, research and the pleasure of nature viewing.
- 4) Two groups felt we needed more publicity to inform the MOS membership about sanctuaries through programs at chapter meetings and updating the Sanctuary Guide.

Upcoming meeting—I am planning to have a meeting of the Sanctuary Strategic Planning Committee early in 2003. If there is anyone who was not able to attend the PIF meetings or the workshop and would like to share their thoughts and feelings about the future of our sanctuaries, please contact me.



IN 2003 ... HEAD NORTH TO ALASKA ...

Phil and Barbara Davis of Davidsonville, MD will again be co-leading exciting trips for High Lonesome Ecotours to the unique Native American village of Gambell, Alaska, in search of Asian vagrants and western Alaska specialties. Gambell is situated on Saint Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, only 35 miles off the coast of Siberia. In 2003, we have added **fall trips** and expanded the spring trips. Dates for the 2003 trips are:



Spring 2003

Trip 1: May 20 – 25

Trip 2: May 26 – May 31

Trip 3: June 1 – June 6

Fall 2003

Trip 4: August 28 – September 3

Trip 5: September 4 – September 10

Our spring trips have found the following sought-after species: Bean Goose, Arctic Loon, Yellow-billed Loon, Emperor Goose, all four eiders (Common, King, Spectacled, Steller's), Pacific Golden-Plover, Common Ringed Plover, Mongolian Plover, Gray-tailed Tattler, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint, Long-toed Stint, Rock Sandpiper, all three jaegers, Slaty-backed Gull, Ross's Gull, Ivory Gull, Dovekie, both murrelets (Common, Thick-billed), both guillemots (Black, Pigeon), murrelets (Kittlitz's and Ancient), three auklets (Parakeet, Least, Crested), two puffins (Tufted, Horned), Bluethroat, Northern Wheatear, White Wagtail, Red-throated Pipit, McKay's Bunting, Brambling, Hoary Redpoll, and Eurasian Bullfinch. Other spring targets species include: Eurasian Dotterel, Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Great Knot, Little Stint, Temminck's Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, "Eurasian" Common Snipe, Siberian Rubythroat, Dusky Thrush, Hawfinch, and many more.

Fall species found at Gambell have included: Short-tailed Shearwater, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Oriental Cuckoo, Fork-tailed Swift, Dusky Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Willow Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher, Stonechat, Siberian Accentor, Pipits (Olive-backed, Tree), Little Bunting, Reed Bunting, and Common Rosefinch.

For more information on these trips, including prices, visit the Gambell, Alaska link on the High Lonesome EcoTours web site or e-mail them:

Web: <http://www.hilonesome.com/>

E-mail: hilone@hilonesome.com

A photo essay from our 2001 trip to Western Alaska, including Gambell and other locations, is posted on the Surfbirds web site at:

<http://www.surfbirds.com/Features/pdalaska01-1.html>

Just curious for more information? Email or call us personally and we'll forward you a copy of our "Top Ten Reasons" to join us this year in Gambell.

Phil and Barbara Davis
pdavis@ix.netcom.com



Terek Sandpiper, Gambell 2001. F. Davis

MOS Calendar, January/February 2003

Wednesday, January 1

FIELD TRIP. Howard. Start Your 2003 Bird List. The one day of the year when every bird you spot is new! Start your year list off with a bang and join us for a morning of listing. We will visit a variety of locations around the county looking for as many species as possible. Meet at the Centennial park concession stand at 8:00 a.m. For further information, contact the leader; Kurt Schwarz at 410-461-1643

Thursday, January 2

MEETING. Frederick. Gail McKiernan will give a presentation on "Birds of the Caribbean." Meet at Monocacy Elementary School at 7:30 p.m. Call Marcia Balestri at 301-473-5098 for details.

Friday, January 3

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Owls of North America" by David Brinker. 8:00 p.m. at the DNR Conference Room, Tawes Building, corner of Taylor Avenue and Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis.

Saturday, January 4

FIELD TRIP. Tri-County. MD/DE Coastal Birding for winter specialties and hopefully a few Christmas Count discoveries. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the north parking lot of the Asbury Methodist Church in Salisbury. For further information, contact the leader, Sam Dyke, at 410-742-5497.

Sunday, January 5

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Conowingo Gull Watch. Whether you are a serious lister or just want to see something new, this one is for you. Join renowned gull expert Gene Scarpulla at the Conowingo Dam for rarities such as Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, or Black-headed Gulls. Meet at 8 a.m. at the base of the dam (Fisherman's Park; east end of Shure's Landing Road). Mostly stationary trip, heavy clothing and warm beverage is recommended. For more information, contact coordinator, Les Eastman at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

Wednesday, January 8

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. Our monthly visit to assist Jim Peters in the National Aquarium's project of surveying bird activity around a 10-acre man-made (mitigated) wetland. Folding chair and telescope useful. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain). Meet 9:30 a.m. at Fort McHenry. From the entrance, the wetlands are to the right. Meet just past the statue of Orpheus. Coordinators Gail Frantz 410-833-7135, guineabird@aol.com, and Catherine Bishop, 410-435-9569.

Thursday, January 9

MEETING. Frederick. TBD. Meet at Monocacy Elementary School at 7:30 p.m. Call Marcia Balestri (301-473-5098) for details.

MEETING. Howard. "Whooping Crane Recovery Program," by Dr. George Gee, Patuxent Research Center. Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Drive, Columbia. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/Program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Kurt Schwarz at 410-461-1643.

Friday, January 10

MEETING. Harford. Program TBA. Meet at 7:00 p.m. at Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 & MD 136. For further information, call 410-879-0642.

Saturday, January 11

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY. Carroll. Our yearly tradition at the Yingling residence. Come & have a good time. 8:00 p.m. until ??? For more information, call Sue Yingling at 410-876-8211.

TWELFTH ANNUAL HARFORD COUNTY FEEDER TOUR. This morning trip will tour two to three bird-feeder establishments in Harford County. This trip enjoys the warm atmosphere of our hosts (and maybe donuts also), so walking is limited and mostly indoors. Participation is limited, so contact our coordinator, Spike Updegrove at 410-838-1783.

Sunday, January 12

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Conowingo Dam for gulls and eagles. Thousands of gulls, possibly some rarities, as well as waterfowl, raptors and eagles. Wear warm clothing and boots. Telescopes useful. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the White Marsh Mall at light pole on NE side of Sears. For further information, contact the leader, Gene Scarpulla, at 410-821-0575 or email: ejscarp@comcast.net.

MEETING. Baltimore. Covered Dish Supper at 5:30 p.m. at the Cylburn Mansion. Bring along your favorite dish and enjoy the delicious variety of food prepared by other BBC members. Presentation follows: "2002 Birder's Odyssey: Is There a Scottish Crossbill?" by Hank Kaestner. For further information, contact Shirley Geddes at 410-377-6583.

Wednesday, January 15

MEETING. Montgomery. "The Northern Goshawk: a Bird Driven by its Prey" by David Brinker, Maryland Department of Natural Resources. 7:30 p.m. at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac, MD.

Thursday, January 16

MEETING. Caroline. "Seabirds of the Maritime Provinces of Canada" by Dr. Robert Trever. 7:30 p.m. at the Caroline County Public Library, 100 Market St., Denton.

Saturday, January 18

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Gulls and other wintering birds. Location TBD by leader. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Severna Park Park & Ride lot located in the NW corner at the intersection of Jones Station Road and Ritchie Highway. For further information, contact the leader, Sue Ricciardi, at 410-647-9513.

MOS Calendar, January/February 2003

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. New Design Road and Lilypons. For Horned Larks, sparrows and hawks, possible Lapland Longspurs. Telescopes useful. Some walking in exposed, cold, windy fields; wear warm clothing and boots. Meet 8:00 a.m. at the Security Boulevard Park & Ride at the east end of I-70. For further information, contact the leader, Pete Webb, at 410-486-1217 or email: pwebb@bcpl.net.

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Saturday monitoring walks at Fort. McHenry wetlands. Canceled if raining. Meet 8:00 a.m. at Fort McHenry. From the entrance, the wetlands are to the right. Meet just past the statue of Orpheus. For further information, contact the leader, Jim Peters, at 410-429-0966.

Sunday, January 19

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Perryman Area. Join Debbie Bowers in visiting the coastal plain "Eastern Shore" analog in Harford County. Targets will include Short-eared Owl, Rough-winged Hawk, Tree Sparrows and Horned Larks. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Wal-Mart in Aberdeen (east end of lot). For questions, contact Debbie at 410-692-9741.

Wednesday, January 22

MEETING. Cecil. Bob Rinker of T.G. Outdoor Photography will present slide show on nature photography. Meet at 7 p.m. at the Elkton High School Library located in Elkton, MD. For further information, contact Rick Lee at 410-287-0415.

Saturday, January 25

FIELD TRIP. Frederick. Maryland Hotline Trip. We will be looking for winter rarities reported on the hotline. Emphasis will be on Frederick County birds, but we may wander farther afield depending on what's out there. Meet at Culler Lake Boathouse in Baker Park (2nd Street just west of College Terrace) at 7:30 a.m. Call Marcia Balestri (301-473-5098) for information.

Sunday, January 26

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Annapolis Neck & Thomas Point, A. A. County. Waterfowl and soup social. Meet at 12:00 noon at the Bay Ridge Shopping Center lot. For further information, contact the leader, Gerald Winegrad, at 410-820-8956.

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Havre de Grace Waterfowl. Come join local guide Randy Robertson to view waterfowl from the boardwalk at Havre de Grace, winding up with a tour of the Decoy Museum. A small fee to enter the museum will be necessary. Meet at the Decoy Museum at 1 PM. For questions, contact Randy at 410-273-9029 or rrobertson@ineva.com.

Monday, January 27

MEETING. Tri-County. "Migration of the Red Knot – Virginia's Barrier Islands to the Canadian Arctic" by Barry Truitt. Meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Fox Room of the Asbury Methodist Church in Salisbury. For further information, contact Sam Dyke at 410-742-5497.

Saturday, February 1

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Greenbury Point for waterfowl and sparrows. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot of the Bay 50 Shopping Center off Rt. 50 on White Hall Road. For further information, contact the leader, Al Haury at 410-923-0881.

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Winter Waterfowl at Marshy Point. Baltimore County's newest nature center for winter waterfowl: ducks, geese, swans. Half mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable. Telescopes useful. Exit Beltway I-695 at Rt. 702 south. 2nd exit onto Chase/Eastern Blvd. Go 6 miles. Turn right at sign for Dundee & Saltpeter Creek Park. Go 1/4 mile to dead end. To confirm, call the leader, Bob Rineer, at 410-391-8499.

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Bradenbaugh Flats. Join local bird expert Dr. Dennis Kirkwood at the World Famous Bradenbaugh Flats for piedmont winter favorites and rarities. Possible species will include Horned Larks, American Pipit, and Lapland Longspurs. Meet at Jarrettsville Elementary School at 8:30 a.m. For details contact Dennis at 410-692-5905.

Tuesday, February 4

MEETING. Baltimore. "Maryland Coast to Crest: A Look at our State's Biodiversity" by Dr. Charles Stine. 7:30 p.m. at Sherwood House at Cromwell Valley Park. Follow signs in the park off Cromwell Bridge Road 1.3 miles north of I-695 Beltway exit 29A.

Wednesday, February 5

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. Our monthly visit to assist Jim Peters in the National Aquarium's project of surveying bird activity around a 10-acre man-made (mitigated) wetland. Folding chair and telescope useful. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain). Meet 9:30 a.m. at Fort McHenry. From the entrance, the wetlands are to the right. Meet just past the statue of Orpheus. Coordinators Gail Frantz 410-833-7135, guineabird@aol.com, and Catherine Bishop, 410-435-9569.

MEETING. Carroll. "Random Moments in Nature". by Mike Smith. 7:30 p.m. at the Carroll Community College, 1601 Washington Road, Westminster, MD. For more information, contact Amy Hoffman at 410-549-3598.

Thursday, February 6

MEETING. Frederick. Wilbur Hershberger will give a presentation on "The Sights and Sounds of Audrey Carroll." Meet at Monocacy Elementary School at 7:30 p.m. Call Marcia Balestri (301-473-5098) for details.

MOS Calendar, January/February 2003

Friday, February 7

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Vernal Pools – Breeding Amphibians" by Robin Jung. 8:00 p.m. at the DNR Conference Room, Tawes Building, corner of Taylor Avenue and Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis.

Saturday, February 8

FIELD TRIP. Howard. Winter Birds at Alpha Ridge Park and Environs. We will bird the areas around Alpha Ridge with a possible trip into the landfill and or Mt. Pleasant. Wintering sparrows, pipits, horned larks and hawks. Trip may include difficult walking through bleak habitat. Meet at Alpha Ridge Park at 8:00 a.m. For further information, contact the leader; Ralph Cullison at 410-442-2181.

Sunday, February 9

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Feeder Watch. Winter birds at backyard feeders. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Parole Park & Ride lot located off Harry Truman Parkway. For further information, contact the leaders, Lynn Kenny, at 301-464-8371 or George Thomas at 410-987-9354.

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Rocks State Park. Tour the winter beauty of Rocks State Park in search of winter finches, woodpeckers, and parids. Excellent trip for beginners; some moderate hiking involved. Meet at the park headquarters on Rocks Chrome Hill Road at 7:30. For details, contact the leader, Mary Procell at 410-838-2172.

Thursday, February 13

Meeting. Howard. "Colorado Chicken Trek," by Bob Ringler. Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, Columbia. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/Program begins at 8:00. For further information call Kurt Schwarz at 410-461-1643.

Saturday-Monday, February 15-17

FIELD TRIP. Anne Arundel. Annual Winter Weekend Birding Trip to Chincoteague and other shore locations. Make reservations by Feb. 7. For further information and reservations, contact the leader, Larry Zoller, at 410-987-9354.

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Saturday monitoring walks at Fort. McHenry wetlands. Canceled if raining. Meet 8:00 a.m. at Fort McHenry. From the entrance, the wetlands are to the right. Meet just past the statue of Orpheus. For further information, contact the leader, Jim Peters, at 410-429-0966.

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Cape Henlopen to Ocean City. Trip to Delaware coast and Ocean City in search of Scoters, Oldsquaw, Brant, Purple Sandpipers, Red-throated Loons, and Gannets. Eiders and Harlequin Ducks possible. Telescopes very useful. Meals bought on the road. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Nursery Road - Hammonds Ferry Road Park & Ride at Beltway Exit 8. Optional meeting place: Cape May-Lewes Ferry parking lot at 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact the leader, Pete Webb, at 410-486-1217 or pwebb@bcpl.net.

FIELD TRIP. Frederick. President's Weekend Trip to the Eastern Shore. Call Mike Welch (301-874-5828) to reserve a spot.

Sunday, February 16

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Black Marsh. Join the top-notch birdwatching team of Jean and Larry Fry for an enjoyable flat walk along the Marshy Point, Black Marsh area of Baltimore County, with an extension to Fort Howard and other areas of Back, Middle, and Patapsco Rivers. Targets include Scaup, Canvasback, Bufflehead, Ruddy Ducks, and Bald Eagle. Meet at the I-95 / Rt. 152 Park-n-Ride (North lot) at 7 a.m. (near phone booth). Bring lunch and dress warmly. Full day trip. For questions, call Jean or Larry at 410-452-8539.

Tuesday, February 18

MEETING. Allegany. "Avian Communities In A Reclaimed Mine Landscape" by Dr. Petra Wood. Meet at the Board of Education Bldg., 108 Washington St., Cumberland at 7 p.m. Contact JB Churchill at 304-292-5072 for info.

Wednesday, February 19

MEETING. Montgomery. "The Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas, 2002-2005" by Walter Ellison, Maryland Ornithological Society. 7:30 p.m. at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac, MD.

Thursday, February 20

MEETING. Caroline. "Birds of Aberdeen Proving Ground." By Jim McCann. 7:30 p.m. at the Caroline County Public Library, 100 Market St., Denton.

Saturday, February 22

FIELD TRIP. Baltimore. Patuxent Naval Air Station. Southern Maryland reservation-only trip for winter delights. Guaranteed to get lots of Horned Larks, Savannah Sparrows and a great variety of waterfowl. Snow Bunting likely, Common Snipe, Lapland Longspur and Short-eared Owl possible. Limit 20 people, by reservation only. Call Pete Webb at 410-486-1217, or pwebb@bcpl.net, to reserve your space on this special trip. "Snow date" is March 8. The leader is Kyle Rambo.

FIELD TRIP. Carroll. A day of fun birding over the Bay Bridge on Kent Island. Meet 7:00 a.m. at the Park & Ride at I-70 & Rt. 32. For more information, contact trip leader Bob Ringler at 410-549-6031.

FIELD TRIP. Frederick. Timberdoodles at Audrey Carroll. Doug Parker and Wilbur Hershberger will lead us on a search for American Woodcocks. Last year we had excellent looks at them displaying and on the ground. Meet at the Park & Ride, Rte. 75 just south of I-70 at 5:30 p.m. Bring a flashlight. For information call Doug (301-663-1909).

FIELD TRIP. Harford. Delaware Shore / Cape Henlopen. This perennial favorite will explore the hot spots along the lower Delaware Bay with a possible extension to the Atlantic Ocean (at the Indian River Inlet). Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks are targets, with possible Peregrine Falcon and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Meet Les Eastman at the I-95/Rt. 155 Park-n-Ride at 6:30 a.m. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Scopes are helpful. For questions, call or email Les at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

MOS Calendar, January/February 2003

Sunday, February 23

FIELD TRIP. Tri-County. Southern Dorchester County. Joint trip with Talbot Bird Club. Blackwater NWR to Elliott's island for waterfowl and raptors. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the north parking lot of the Asbury Methodist Church in Salisbury. Leader TBA. For further information, contact Sam Dyke at 410-742-5497.

Monday, February 24

MEETING. Tri-County. "Creating a Bird Garden with Plants and Moving Water" by Bill Fintel. Meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Fox Room of the Asbury Methodist Church in Salisbury. For further information, contact Sam Dyke at 410-742-5497.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR CHAPTER PROGRAM PLANNERS:

MD/DC Records Committee Outreach Program

by Paul O'Brien

The MD/DC Records Committee, a standing committee of the Maryland Ornithological Society, has developed a program designed to inform the members of MOS of the goals and purposes of the Records Committee as well as to provide assistance in the documentation of rarities and encouragement in reporting such observations to the MD/DCRC. A one hour presentation has been prepared for inclusion in the programs of each MOS chapter. A Committee member will be available whenever the chapter would like to schedule an appearance.

The interactive program will consist of a discussion of the Committee's function and procedures and a slide show of some of the more spectacular rarities found in Maryland for which photographic documentation was submitted. In addition, the basic guidelines for written descriptions will be reviewed and illustrated with several examples, using slides to discuss what one should attempt to observe and record in order to provide convincing documentation. In the real world, one does not always get a protracted look at a bird and consequently cannot be certain of seeing all the crucial features. Some examples will be reviewed of documentation that simply did not have enough information to rule out all similar species, with discussion of the requisite additional details.

The goal of this presentation will be to encourage MOS members to submit their observations to the MD/DCRC so that we can more thoroughly provide permanent documentation of the occurrence of unusual birds in the state. One does not have to be a professional photographer to submit documentation that is convincing. What is needed is attention to critical details and careful note taking. This presentation is designed to help birders hone those skills while also showing outstanding slides of remarkable birds.

For further information, and to schedule a presentation in your chapter, contact Paul O'Brien, 12 Duke St. South, Rockville, MD 20850-1014, 301-424-6491, pobrien776@aol.com.

AND AN IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ALL MOS MEMBERS:

Thinking of Buying Your Optics Online?

If you're considering buying optics in the near future and if you're thinking of buying them online from Eagle Optics, did you know that 5% of your purchase price could be refunded to MOS? It's true! Let me tell you how.

When you have browsed Eagle Optics website to your heart's content and you're just about ready to pull out that credit card and order your dream binoculars or that scope you've wanted for years, take a moment and first point your web browser to the MOS website at <http://www.mdbirds.org>.

Near the top of the opening page of the MOS website you'll see a box labelled "Eagleoptics.com Optics for Birders." Clicking on this box will take you back to Eagle Optics but with one very important difference. Any purchases you make now will result in 5% being refunded directly to MOS.

No kidding—this really works! Already MOS has received refunds of over \$150 and we have only talked about this feature at one MOS Board Meeting!

So, get those new optics you've been salivating over and earn some money for MOS at the same time! Just point to www.mdbirds.org then go from there to Eagle Optics via the link at the top of the opening page.

The copy deadline for the Mar / Apr issue of the Yellowthroat is January 25 for chapter activities and February 1 for all other submissions.

Send calendar entries for March & April to:

Les Eastman
4034 Wilkinson Rd.
Havre de Grace, MD 21078
W: 410-436-3490
H: 410-734-6969

Please send all other submissions to the editor:

Norman C. Saunders
1261 Cavendish Drive
Colesville, MD 20905
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W: 202-691-5707

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